



HAL
open science

An Ontology-based Mediation Architecture for E-commerce Applications

Óscar Corcho, Asunción Gómez-Pérez, Alain Léger, Christophe Rey, Farouk
Toumani

► **To cite this version:**

Óscar Corcho, Asunción Gómez-Pérez, Alain Léger, Christophe Rey, Farouk Toumani. An Ontology-based Mediation Architecture for E-commerce Applications. International Conference on Intelligent Information Processing and Web Mining (IIPWM'03), Jun 2003, Zakopane, Poland. pp.477-486, 10.1007/978-3-540-36562-4_51 . hal-02079199

HAL Id: hal-02079199

<https://hal.science/hal-02079199>

Submitted on 5 Mar 2024

HAL is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L'archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d'enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.

Table of contents

Part I. Immunogenetics

Model of the Immune System to Handle Constraints in Evolutionary Algorithm for Pareto Task Assignments	3
<i>Jerzy Balicki, Zygmunt Kitowski</i>	
Function Optimization with Coevolutionary Algorithms	13
<i>Franciszek Sereczynski, Albert Y. Zomaya, Pascal Bowry</i>	
Studying Properties of Multipopulation Heuristic Approach to Non-Stationary Optimisation Tasks	23
<i>Krzysztof Trojanowski, Sławomir T. Wierchoń</i>	
An Immune-based Approach to Document Classification	33
<i>Jamie Twycross, Steve Cayzer</i>	

Part II. Recommenders and Text Classifiers

Entish: Agent Communication Language for Service Integration	49
<i>Stanislaw Ambroszkiewicz</i>	
Automated Classification of Web Documents into a Hierarchy of Categories	59
<i>Michelangelo Ceci, Floriana Esposito, Michele Lapi, Donato Malerba</i>	
Extraction of User Profiles by Discovering Preferences through Machine Learning	69
<i>Marco Degemmis, Pasquale Lops, Giovanni Semeraro, Fabio Abbattista</i>	
Safer Decisions Against A Dynamic Opponent	79
<i>Wojciech Jamroga</i>	
Bayesian Nets for Recommender Systems	87
<i>Mieczysław A. Kłopotek, Sławomir T. Wierchoń</i>	

Implementing Adaptive User Interface for Web Applications	97
<i>Tadeusz Morzy, Marek Wojciechowski, Maciej Zakrzewicz, Piotr Dachtera, Piotr Jurga</i>	
Web-based Intelligent Tutoring System with Strategy Selec- tion Using Consensus Methods	105
<i>Janusz Sobecki, Krzysztof Morel, Tomasz Bednarczuk</i>	
Discovering Company Descriptions on the Web by Multiway Analysis	111
<i>Vojtěch Svátek, Petr Berka, Martin Kavalec, Jiří Kosek, Vladimír Vávra</i>	
<hr/>	
Part III. Natural Language Processing for Search Engines and Other Web Applications	
<hr/>	
Passage Extraction in Geographical Documents	121
<i>F. Bilhaut, T. Charnois, P. Enjalbert, Y. Mathet</i>	
Morphological Categorization Attribute Value Trees and XML	131
<i>Stefan Diaconescu</i>	
Towards a Framework Design of a Retrieval Document System Based on Rhetorical Structure Theory and Cue Phrases	139
<i>Kamel Haouam, Ameer Tourir, Farhi Marir</i>	
Adaptive Translation between User's Vocabulary and Internet Queries	149
<i>Agnieszka Indyka-Piasecka, Maciej Piasecki</i>	
Aspect Assignment in a Knowledge-based English-Polish Ma- chine Translation System	159
<i>Anna Kupś</i>	
An Approach to Rapid Development of Machine Translation System for Internet	169
<i>Marek Łabuzek, Maciej Piasecki</i>	
Hierarchical Clustering of Text Corpora Using Suffix Trees	179
<i>Irmína Maślowska, Roman Słowiński</i>	
Semantic Indexing for Intelligent Browsing of Distributed Data	189
<i>M. Ouziri, C. Verdier, A. Flory</i>	

An Improved Algorithm on Word Sense Disambiguation 199
Gabriela Șerban, Doina Tătar

Web Search Results Clustering in Polish: Experimental Evaluation of Carrot 209
Dawid Weiss, Jerzy Stefanowski

Part IV. Data Mining and Machine Learning Technologies

A Hybrid Genetic Algorithm - Decision Tree Classifier 221
Abdel-Badeeh M.Salem, Abeer M.Mahmoud

Optimization of the ABCD Formula Used for Melanoma Diagnosis 233
Alison Alvarez, Stanislaw Bajcar, Frank M. Brown, Jerzy W. Grzymala-Busse, Zdzislaw S. Hippe

An Instance Reduction Algorithm for Supervised Learning . . . 241
Ireneusz Czarnowski, Piotr Jędrzejowicz

Dependence of Two Multiresponse Variables: Importance of The Counting Method 251
Guillermo Bali Ch., Andrzej Matuszewski, Mieczysław A. Kłopotek

On Effectiveness of Pre-processing by Clustering in Prediction of C.E. Technological Data with ANNs 261
Janusz Kasperkiewicz, Dariusz Alterman

The Development of the Inductive Database System VINLEN: A Review of Current Research 267
Kenneth A. Kaufman, Ryszard S. Michalski

Automatic Classification of Executable Code for Computer Virus Detection 277
Paweł Kierski, Michał Okoniewski, Piotr Gawrysiak

Heuristic Search for an Optimal Architecture of a Locally Recurrent Neural Network 285
Andrzej Obuchowicz, Krzysztof Patan

Discovering Extended Action-Rules (System DEAR) 293
Zbigniew W. Ras, Li-Shiang Tsay

Discovering Semantic Inconsistencies to Improve Action Rules Mining 301
Zbigniew W. Ras, Angelina A. Tzacheva

Incremental Rule Induction for Multicriteria and Multiattribute Classification	311
<i>Jerzy Stefanowski, Marcin Żurawski</i>	
Statistical and Neural Network Forecasts of Apparel Sales	321
<i>Les M. Sztandera, Celia Frank, Ashish Garg, Amar Raheja</i>	
Mining Knowledge About Process Control in Industrial Databases	331
<i>Robert Szulim, Wojciech Moczulski</i>	
Acquisition of Vehicle Control Algorithms	341
<i>Shang Fulian, Wojciech Ziarko</i>	
<hr/>	
Part V. Logics for Artificial Intelligence	
<hr/>	
Algebraic Operations on Fuzzy Numbers	353
<i>Witold Kosiński, Piotr Prokopowicz, Dominik Ślęzak</i>	
Dual Resolution for Logical Reduction of Granular Tables	363
<i>Antoni Ligęza</i>	
Computer-Oriented Sequent Inferring without Preliminary Skolemization	373
<i>Alexander Lyaletski</i>	
Converting Association Rules into Natural Language – an At- tempt	383
<i>Petr Strossa, Jan Rauch</i>	
Proof Searching Algorithm for the Logic of Plausible Reasoning	393
<i>Bartłomiej Śnieżyński</i>	
<hr/>	
Part VI. Time Dimension in Data Mining	
<hr/>	
Collective Intelligence from a Population of Evolving Neural Networks	401
<i>Aleksander Byrski, Marek Kisiel-Dorohinicki</i>	
Taming Surprises	411
<i>Zbigniew R. Struzik</i>	

Problems with Automatic Classification of Musical Sounds ...	423
<i>Alicja A. Wieczorkowska, Jakub Wróblewski, Dominik Ślęzak, Piotr Synak</i>	
Discovering Dependencies in Sound Descriptors	431
<i>Alicja A. Wieczorkowska, <u>Jan M. Żytkow</u></i>	

Part VII. Invited Session: Information Extraction and Web Mining by Machine

Intelligent Systems and Information Extraction - True and Applicative	441
<i>Matjaz Gams</i>	
Ontology-based Text Document Clustering	451
<i>Steffen Staab, Andreas Hotho</i>	
Ontology Learning from Text: Tasks and Challenges for Machine Learning	453
<i>Jörg-Uwe Kietz</i>	

Part VIII. Invited Session: Web Services and Ontologies

Caching Dynamic Data for E-Business Applications	459
<i>Mehregan Mahdavi, Boualem Benatallah, Fethi Rabhi</i>	
A Contextual Language Approach for Multirepresentation Ontologies	467
<i>Djamal Benslimane, Ahmed Arara, Christelle Vangenot, Kokou Yetongnon</i>	
An Ontology-based Mediation Architecture for E-commerce Applications	477
<i>O. Corcho, A. Gomez-Perez, A. Leger, C. Rey, F. Toumani</i>	

Part IX. Invited Session: Reasoning in AI

On generalized quantifiers, finite sets and data mining	489
<i>Petr Hájek</i>	

Part X. Invited Session: AI Applications in Medicine

MLEM2—Discretization During Rule Induction	499
<i>Jerzy W. Grzymala-Busse</i>	

Part XI. Short Contributions

A Hybrid Model Approach to Artificial Intelligence	511
<i>Kevin Deeb, Ricardo Jimenez</i>	
Applying Transition Networks in Translating Polish E-Mails ..	521
<i>Krzysztof Jassem, Filip Graliński, Tomasz Kowalski</i>	
Link Recommendation Method Based on Web Content and Usage Mining	529
<i>Przemysław Kazienko, Maciej Kiewra</i>	
Conceptual Modeling of Concurrent Information Systems with General Morphisms of Petri Nets	535
<i>Bolesław Mikolajczak, Zuyan Wang</i>	
Reliability of the Navigational Data	541
<i>Marek Przyborski, Jerzy Pyrchla</i>	
Evaluation of Authorization with Delegation and Negation ...	547
<i>Chun Ruan, Vijay Varadharajan, Yan Zhang</i>	
Decision Units as a Tool for Rule Base Modeling and Verification	553
<i>Roman Simiński, Alicja Wakulicz-Deja</i>	
Advantages of Deploying Web Technology in Warfare Simulation System	557
<i>Zbigniew Świątnicki, Radosław Semkło</i>	
Knowledge Management and Data Classification in Pellucid	563
<i>Dang T.-Tung, Hluchy L., Nguyen T. Giang, Budinska I., Balogh Z., Laclavik M.</i>	
A Representation of Relational Systems	569
<i>Jacek Waldmajer</i>	
Concept of the Knowledge Quality Management for Rule-Based Decision System	575
<i>Michał Wozniak</i>	

An ontology-based mediation architecture for E-commerce applications

O. Corcho¹, A. Gomez-Perez¹, A. Leger², C. Rey³, and F. Toumani³

¹ Universidad Politécnica de Madrid (ocorcho@fi.upm.es, asun@fi.upm.es)

² France Telecom R&D (alain.leger@rd.francetelecom.com)

³ LIMOS, Université Blaise Pascal, France (rey@isima.fr, ftoumani@isima.fr)

Abstract. As part of the MKBEEM project, we present an ontology based mediation framework for electronic commerce applications. The framework is based on a mediator/wrapper approach that supports an integrated view over multiple heterogeneous sources. The MKBEEM mediation system allows to fill the gap between customers queries (possibly expressed in a natural language) and diverse specific providers offers. In contrast with many existing mediator based systems, our approach rests on a three-layer knowledge representation architecture which includes an *electronic services* ontology besides the usual domain ontology and sources descriptions layers. At the reasoning level, we propose a new mechanism, namely *dynamic discovery of e-services*, that acts in collaboration with the Picsel mediator system to effectively achieve the MKBEEM mediation tasks.

1 Introduction

The recent progress and wider dissemination of electronic commerce via the world wide web has dramatically increased the diversity and heterogeneities in corresponding systems. To avoid this progress to be hampered by closed markets with incompatible applications that cannot use each other services, there is a need for efficient and flexible mechanisms to handle the interoperability problem. Today, we expect that emerging standards will solve most of the syntactic infrastructure problems. However, dealing with sources from different domains and their semantics differences requires to handle the interoperability problem at the semantic level.

The notion of mediation has been proposed as the principal means to resolve problems of semantic interoperation [13]. Mediation architectures are generally based on the mediator/wrapper paradigm where information sources are "wrapped" to logical views so that their interfaces to the outside world are uniform [13,8]. These logical views are "glued" together through an integrated global schema usually called the domain ontology. In such architectures, a mediator acts as an interface between user queries or application programs and existing information sources: queries against the domain ontology are reformulated in terms of logical views and then sent to the remote sources.

In this paper, we present a **three-layer ontology-based mediation framework** for electronic commerce applications. In contrast with many

existing mediator based systems, the proposed architecture includes an *electronic services ontology* besides the usual domain ontology and sources descriptions layers. Roughly speaking, an electronic service (e-service)¹ can be seen as an application made available via Internet and accessible by humans and/or other applications [2,3,6]. Examples of e-services currently available range from weather forecast, on-line travel reservation or banking services to entire business functions of an organization. Whereas in many e-commerce platforms, e-services are associated to providers, we propose to define an e-service as an *integrated provider-independent offer* available on a given e-commerce platform. Then, to effectively handle the mediation tasks, we rely on two reasoning mechanisms:

- the first, called **dynamic discovery of e-services**, allows to reformulate users queries against the domain ontology in terms of e-services. The aim here is to allow the users and applications to automatically discover the available e-services that best meet their needs at any given time,
- the second, called *query plan generation*, allows to reformulate a user query, expressed as a combination of e-services, in terms of providers views. The aim of this second issue is to allow the identification of the views that are able to answer to the query (knowing that, afterwards, the query plans will be translated into databases queries via the corresponding wrappers).

While the second reasoning mechanism, known as *query rewriting using views*, has already been addressed in the literature [11,5,8], the first is a quite new problem for which we propose a solution in this paper.

The rest of this paper is organized as follows. The context of this study, namely the MKBEEM² project, is introduced in Section 2. The architecture of the MKBEEM ontology is presented in Section 3. In Section 4, the dynamic identification of e-services is detailed. We conclude in Section 5.

2 The MKBEEM mediation system

The global aim of the MKBEEM project is to extend current electronic commerce platforms to reach a truly pan European and culturally open electronic commerce market. The main technical aim of MKBEEM is to create an *intelligent knowledge based multilingual* mediation service which displays the following features:

- Natural language interfaces for both the end user and the system's content providers/service providers.
- Automatic multilingual cataloguing of products by service providers.

¹ Also called web services.

² MKBEEM stands for Multilingual Knowledge Based European Electronic Marketplace (IST-1999-10589, 1st Feb. 2000 - 1st Aug. 2002).

- On-line e-commerce contractual negotiation mechanisms in the language of the user, which guarantee safety and freedom.

A detailed description of the MKBEEM project and relevant references related to this project can be found in [1].

Let us consider an example of a simplified *natural language request* scenario trained on the generic MKBEEM architecture to sketch the roles of the different components of the MKBEEM system: an end user submits to the MKBEEM system a natural language query. The query is received by the **User Agent** component which recognizes the user language and then forwards it to the corresponding **Human Language Processing Server (HLP Server)**. The HLP Server is in charge of *meaning extraction*: he analyzes the input string and converts the query to an *Ontological Formula (OF)* which is a language-independent formula containing the semantic information of the corresponding phrase of human language. The OF is sent to the **Rational Agent (RA)** which is responsible of the dialogue management between the different components of the MKBEEM system. The RA forwards the OF to the **Domain Ontology Server (DOS)**. The DOS module is responsible of storing, accessing and maintaining the ontologies used by the MKBEEM system. It also provides the core reasoning mechanisms needed to support the mediation services. Continuing with the example, the DOS achieves a *contextual interpretation of the formula* using its knowledge about the application domain. This task consists mainly in the identification of the offers (e-services) delivered by the MKBEEM platform that "*best match*" the ontological formula. The set of solutions computed by the DOS is sent back to the RA which, in collaboration with the *User Agent*, will ask the user to choose one solution and to complete, if any, the parameters that are missing. After this dialogue phase, the retained solution is sent back to the *DOS* to generate the *query plans*. A query plan contains information about the **Content Providers Agents (CPA)** that are able to answer to the user query. Then, thanks to specific wrappers belonging to CPA a query plan is translated into databases queries which are executed on the remote providers sources.

This example is a typical mediation instance: the user poses queries in terms of the integrated schema (e-services and domain ontology) rather than directly querying specific provider information sources. This enables users to focus on *what* they want, rather than worrying about *how* and *from where* to obtain the answers. Apart from the natural language processing and the wrapping steps, which are no further considered in this paper (cf. [1] for more details), the MKBEEM mediation relies on two rewriting steps achieved by the DOS:

1. A contextual interpretation step: the OF is rewritten into a few E-Services Formula (ESF) which have been dynamically identified as the combinations of e-services that "*best match*" the OF. Here are mainly used the e-services ontology and the domain ontology layers. In the sequel, we refer to this task as *dynamic discovery of e-services*.

2. A query plan generation step: the ESF are rewritten into a few query plans where the Content Providers Agents that are able to answer the user query are identified. Here is mainly used the sources descriptions layer. In the sequel, we refer to this task as *query plan generation*.

The problem of query plan generation, known as *query rewriting using views*, has already been studied in the research area of information integration [5,8]. That is why, in the MKBEEM mediation system, the DOS relies on the Pícsel [8] mediator to handle this task. Pícsel is a description logic based information integration system. It uses the \mathcal{ALN} -CARIN³ language as the core logical formalism to represent both the domain ontology and the contents of information sources. The query rewriting algorithm implemented in the Pícsel system is proved to be sound and complete. On the contrary, the dynamic discovery of e-services is a new research problem. This is our proposal to solve it, that is detailed in section 4, after the presentation of the three-layer ontology.

3 Architecture of the MKBEEM ontology

The MKBEEM Ontologies are defined as a knowledge structure to enable sharing and reuse of information. They provide a consensual representation of the electronic commerce field in two typical Domains (Tourism and Mail order) allowing the exchanges independently of the language of the end user, the service, or the content provider. Ontologies are used for classifying and indexing catalogues, for filtering user's query, for facilitating man-machine dialogues between users and software agents, and for inferring information that is relevant to the user's request.

The \mathcal{ALN} -CARIN language has been chosen as the ontology implementation language due to its inferential capabilities. Its description logic part, the \mathcal{ALN} language, contains the following constructors:

- concept conjunction (\sqcap), e.g., the concept description *parent* \sqcap *male* denotes the class of fathers (i.e., male parents),
- the universal role quantification ($\forall RC$), e.g., the description \forall *child**male* denotes the set of individuals whose children are all male,
- the number restriction constructors $\geq nR$ and $\leq nR$, e.g., the description (≥ 1 *child*) denotes the class of parents (i.e., individuals having at least one children), while the description (≤ 1 *leader*) denotes the class of individuals that cannot have more than one leader.
- the negation restricted to atomic concepts ($\neg A$), e.g., the description \neg *male* denotes the class of individuals which are not males (females).

³ \mathcal{ALN} -CARIN is a logical language combining Description Logics and Datalog rules [12].

As all the description logics, \mathcal{ALN} comes equipped with well-defined, set-theoretic semantics. Furthermore, the interesting reasoning problems such as subsumption and satisfiability are decidable for \mathcal{ALN} [7].

The MKBEEM ontologies are structured in three layers, as shown in Figure 1.

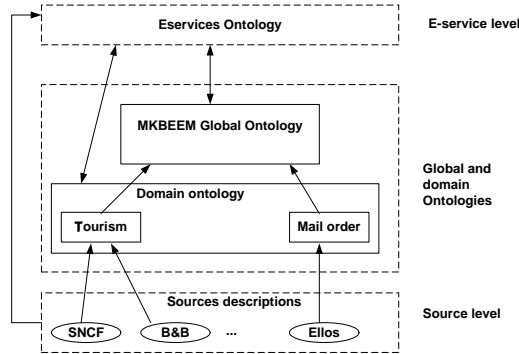


Fig. 1. Knowledge representation in the MKBEEM system.

These three layers are described below.

1. Global and domain Ontologies.

The global ontology describes the common terms used in the whole MKBEEM platform. This ontology represents knowledge reusable on different domains while each domain ontology contains concepts corresponding to one of the domains of the MKBEEM partners (e.g., tourism, mail orders, etc.). This decomposition in global and domain modular ontologies has allowed us to reuse many definitions from existing ontologies and more easily create definitions of the domain ontologies.

Example 1. Table 1 provides the definitions of the concept **Date** and **Time** of the global ontology. The travel domain ontology contains, among others, the concept **trip** which has a departure place (the role **depPlace**), an arrival place (the role **arrPlace**) and may have a transport mean (the role **transportMean**), and the concept **accommodation** which is located in a place (role **placedIn**) and has a starting date (the role **startDate**).

2. E-services ontology.

All the offers available in the MKBEEM platform are integrated and described in the e-services ontology. An e-service can be seen as a provider-independent predefined query corresponding to an existing offer in the MKBEEM platform.

Example 2. According to e-services ontology given in Table 1, the MKBEEM platform delivers four offers:

- `hotel`, which allows to consult a list of hotels.
- `apartment`, which allows to consult a list of apartments.
- `timetable1`, which allows to consult a trip given the departure place, the arrival place, the departure date and the departure time.
- `timetable2`, which allows to consult a trip given the departure place, the arrival place, the arrival date and the arrival time.

It is worth noting that these e-services are specified independently from a given provider.

3. Sources descriptions.

At the lower knowledge level, sources descriptions specify the providers competencies, i.e., the description of the contents of the providers information sources. Each content provider agent is identified by its name (e.g., SNCF⁴) and can provide many views, each of which corresponds to a possible query (offer) on the provider information source.

Example 3. In the example of the MKBEEM ontologies given in Table 1, four providers are defined: SNCF, cheapJet, Expedia and GitesDeFrance. There are two possibilities for querying the SNCF source to have information about train trips: given information about the departure place and the arrival place and either the departure date and the departure time (view `timetableD`) or the arrival date and the arrival time (view `timetableA`). The cheapJet source allows to consult a list of plane trips given the departure place, the arrival place, the departure date and the departure time (view `planeTrip`). The Expedia provider delivers information about hotels (view `ExpediaHotel`) while GitesDeFrance delivers information about apartments (view `Renting`)

The following section introduces the e-services dynamic discovery mechanism and illustrates how the proposed modular architecture is used to handle the DOS mediation tasks (i.e., contextual interpretation of ontological formulas and query plan generation).

4 E-services discovery

In the MKBEEM project, the *dynamic discovery* mechanism is used in association with the Pictel system to achieve the reasoning tasks in the DOS. The complementary roles of these two complex logical reasoning constitutes the description logic core for query processing in the MKBEEM system. They are in fact two different instances of the problem of rewriting concepts using terminologies [4].

In the following we illustrate the interest of *e-services discovery* using the MKBEEM ontologies provided in table 1.

⁴ SNCF is the french railway company.

Table 1. Example of MKBEEM ontologies.

<u>Global ontology</u>		
time	\doteq	$(\leq 1 \text{ hour}) \sqcap (\geq 1 \text{ hour}) \sqcap (\forall \text{ hour integer}) \sqcap (\leq 1 \text{ minute})$ $\sqcap (\geq 1 \text{ minute}) \sqcap (\forall \text{ minute integer})$
date	\doteq	$(\leq 1 \text{ day}) \sqcap (\geq 1 \text{ day}) \sqcap (\forall \text{ day integer}) \sqcap (\leq 1 \text{ month})$ $\sqcap (\geq 1 \text{ month}) \sqcap (\forall \text{ month string}) \sqcap (\leq 1 \text{ year})$ $\sqcap (\geq 1 \text{ year}) \sqcap (\forall \text{ year integer}) \sqcap (\leq 1 \text{ weekday})$ $\sqcap (\geq 1 \text{ weekday}) \sqcap (\forall \text{ weekday string})$
<u>Travel Domain ontology</u>		
trip	\doteq	$(\leq 1 \text{ depPlace}) \sqcap (\geq 1 \text{ depPlace}) \sqcap (\forall \text{ depPlace string}) \sqcap$ $(\leq 1 \text{ arrPlace}) \sqcap (\geq 1 \text{ arrPlace}) \sqcap (\forall \text{ arrPlace string}) \sqcap$ $(\geq 1 \text{ transportMean}) \sqcap (\forall \text{ transportMean transportMeanType})$
accommodation	\doteq	$(\leq 1 \text{ placedIn}) \sqcap (\geq 1 \text{ placedIn}) \sqcap (\forall \text{ placedIn string}) \sqcap$ $(\leq 1 \text{ startDate}) \sqcap (\geq 1 \text{ startDate}) \sqcap (\forall \text{ startDate date})$
<u>E-services ontology</u>		
hotel	\doteq	$\text{accommodation} \sqcap (\leq 1 \text{ numberOfBeds}) \sqcap (\geq 1 \text{ numberOfBeds}) \sqcap$ $(\forall \text{ numberOfBeds number}) \sqcap (\leq 1 \text{ hotelCategory}) \sqcap$ $(\geq 1 \text{ hotelCategory}) \sqcap (\forall \text{ hotelCategory string})$
apartment	\doteq	$\text{accommodation} \sqcap (\leq 1 \text{ numberOfRooms}) \sqcap (\geq 1 \text{ numberOfRooms}) \sqcap$ $(\forall \text{ numberOfRooms number}) \sqcap (\leq 1 \text{ apartmentCategory}) \sqcap$ $(\geq 1 \text{ apartmentCategory}) \sqcap (\forall \text{ apartmentCategory string})$
timetable1	\doteq	$\text{trip} \sqcap (\forall \text{ depTime time}) \sqcap (\geq 1 \text{ depTime}) \sqcap (\leq 1 \text{ depTime})$ $\sqcap (\leq 1 \text{ depDate}) \sqcap (\geq 1 \text{ depDate}) \sqcap (\forall \text{ depDate date})$
timetable2	\doteq	$\text{trip} \sqcap (\forall \text{ arrTime time}) \sqcap (\geq 1 \text{ arrTime}) \sqcap (\leq 1 \text{ arrTime})$ $\sqcap (\leq 1 \text{ arrDate}) \sqcap (\geq 1 \text{ arrDate}) \sqcap (\forall \text{ arrDate date})$
<u>Sources Descriptions</u>		
Provider	View Name	View Description
SNCF	timetableD	timetable1 \sqcap (\forall transportMean train)
SNCF	timetableA	timetable2 \sqcap (\forall transportMean train)
cheapJet	planeTrip	timetable2 \sqcap (\forall transportMean plane)
Expedia	ExpediaHotel	hotel
GitesDeFrance	Renting	apartment

Example 4. Let us assume that a given user submits to the MKBEEM system the following request expressed in a human language:

Q1: "I'll arrive in Paris on Monday and I look for an accommodation with swimming pool".

The query Q1 is first processed by the HLP Server and converted to the following *ontological formula*:

OF1 : "(trip)(V8), (accommodation)(V7), (arrDate)(V8,C9), (date)(C9), (day)(C9,15), (weekday)(C9,monday), (month)(C9,april), (year)(C9,2002), (arrPlace)(V8,paris), (leisure)(V7,swimmingPool)".

Then, given such an ontological formula, the *e-services discovery* is used by the DOS to identify the corresponding relevant service(s) in the ontology of e-services. This task is achieved in two steps:

1. Converting an ontological formula F into a concept description Q_F
 This task depends on the structure of the ontological formula and on the expressive power of the target language. In the context of the MK-BEEM project, the current ontological formulas generated by the HLP Server have relatively simple structures that can be described using the small description logic $\mathcal{FL}_0 \cup \{(\geq nR)\}$. This logic contains the concept conjunction constructor (\sqcap), the universal role quantification constructor ($\forall R.C$) and the minimal number restriction constructor ($\geq nR$). In this case, we can achieve this task by computing the so-called *most specific concept* [7] corresponding to the ontological formula.

Example 5. The concept description Q_{OF1} corresponding to the ontological formula $OF1$ given in the previous example is:

$$\begin{aligned} Q_{OF1} \doteq & \text{trip} \sqcap \text{accommodation} \sqcap (\geq 1 \text{ arrPlace}) \sqcap (\forall \text{ arrPlace string}) \sqcap \\ & (\geq 1 \text{ arrDate}) \sqcap (\forall \text{ arrDate (date} \sqcap (\geq 1 \text{ day}) \sqcap (\forall \text{ day integer}) \\ & \sqcap (\geq 1 \text{ year}) \sqcap (\forall \text{ year integer}) \sqcap (\geq 1 \text{ month}) \sqcap \\ & (\forall \text{ month string}) \sqcap (\geq 1 \text{ weekday}) \sqcap (\forall \text{ weekday string})) \sqcap \\ & (\geq 1 \text{ leisure}) \sqcap (\forall \text{ leisure string}) \end{aligned}$$

2. Selecting the relevant e-services.
 This problem can be stated as follows: given a user query Q_F and an ontology of e-services T , find a description E , built using (some) of the names defined in T , such that E contains as much as possible of common information with Q_F and as less as possible of extra information with respect to Q_F . We call such a rewriting E a *best cover* of Q_F using T . Therefore, our goal is to rewrite a description Q_F into the closest description expressed as a conjunction of (some) concept names in T .

A best cover E of a concept Q using T is defined as being any conjunction of concept names occurring in T which shares some common information with Q , is consistent with Q and minimizes, in this order, the extra information in Q and not in E and the extra information in E and not in Q . Once the notion of a best cover has been formally defined, the second issue to be addressed is how to find a set of e-services that best covers a given query. This problem, called *best covering problem*, can be stated as follows: given an ontology T and a query description Q , find all the best covers of Q using T .

More technical details about the best covering problem can be found in [9,10]. To sum up, the main results that have been reached are:

- The precise formalization of the best covering problem in the framework of languages where the difference operation is semantically unique (e.g., the description logic $\mathcal{FL}_0 \cup \{(\geq nR)\}$).

- A study of complexity showed that this problem is NP-Hard.
- A reduction of the best covering problem to the problem of computing the minimal transversals with minimum cost of a weighted hypergraph.
- Based on hypergraph theory, a sound and complete algorithm that solves the best covering problem was designed and implemented.

Example 6. Continuing with the example, we expect the following result to be returned by the DOS:

	Identified services	Rest	Missed information
Solution 1	timetable2, apartment	leisure	arrTime.hour, arrTime.minute numberOfRooms, apartmentCategory
Solution 2	timetable2, hotel	leisure	arrTime.hour, arrTime.minute numberOfBeds, hotelCategory

These solutions correspond to the combinations of e-services that best match the ontological formula **OF1**. For each solution, the DOS computes the extra information (column *Missed Information*) brought by the e-services but not contained in the user query. The column **Rest** contains the extra information (**leisure**) contained in the user query and not provided by any e-services. This means that, in the proposed solutions the requirement concerning the leisure is not taken into account.

To continue with the example, assume that the user chooses the first solution (**timetable1, apartment**). Then, he is asked to complete the missed information: the arrival time (hour and minutes), the apartment category and the number of rooms in the apartment. The result is a global query Q , expressed as an E-service Formula (ESF), that will be sent to the Pictel system to identify the Content Provider Agent (CPA) that are able to answer to this query. In our example, the execution of the query Q using the ontologies depicted in Table 1 leads to the unique query plan:

[*SNCF_timetableA, GitesDeFrance_Renting*].

Implementation and validation The *e-services discovery* algorithm has been implemented as an integrated component in the MKBEEM prototype. This prototype is built as a set of Enterprise Java Beans (EJB) components that interact with each other. There are also some components dedicated to the interaction with the user interface built with Java Server Pages (JSPs) or Servlets. Finally, some of these components have the functionality of interacting with the remote (or locally duplicated) databases in the provider information systems. The MKBEEM prototype has been validated on a pan-European scale (France and Finland), with three basic languages (Finnish, English and French) and one optional language (Spanish), in two distinct end-user fields: 1) Business to consumer on-line sales, and 2) Web based travel/tourism services.

5 Conclusion

In this paper, we have presented an ontology-based mediation architecture structured in three layers: global/domain ontology, e-services ontology and provider sources descriptions. In this context, a new reasoning mechanism, called *dynamic discovery of e-services*, is proposed to allow the users to automatically discover the available e-services that best meet their needs. This reasoning mechanism is used in association with the Picisel mediator system to effectively handle the mediation tasks. The modularity of this architecture together with the associated reasoning mechanisms allow to make the whole system provider-independent and more capable to face the great instability and the little lifetime of e-commerce offers and e-services. The proposed architecture has been successfully experienced in the context of the MKBEEM project.

References

1. MKBEEM web site : <http://www.mkbeem.com>.
2. Data Engineering Bulletin: Special Issue on Infrastructure for Advanced E-Services. 24(1), IEEE Computer Society, 2001.
3. The VLDB Journal: Special Issue on E-Services. 10(1), Springer-Verlag Berlin Heidelberg, 2001.
4. F. Baader, R. Küsters, and R. Molitor. Rewriting Concepts Using Terminologies. In *KR'2000, Colorado, USA*, pages 297–308, Apr. 2000.
5. C. Beeri, A.Y. Levy, and M-C. Rousset. Rewriting Queries Using Views in Description Logics. In *ACM PODS, New York, USA*, pages 99–108, Apr. 1997.
6. F. Casati and M-C. Shan. Models and Languages for Describing and Discovering E-Services. In *ACM SIGMOD, Santa Barbara, USA*, May 2001.
7. F. Donini and A. Schaerf M. Lenzerini, D. Nardi. Reasoning in description logics. In *Gerhard Brewka, editor, Foundation of Knowledge Representation*, pages 191–236. CSLI-Publications, 1996.
8. F. Goasdoué and M-C Rousset V. Lattès. The Use of CARIN Language and Algorithms for Information Integration: The PICSEL System. *IJICIS*, 9(4):383–401, 2000.
9. M.S. Hacid, A. Leger, C. Rey, and F. Toumani. Computing concept covers: A preliminary report. In *Workshop on Description Logics. Toulouse, France*, Apr. 2002.
10. M.S. Hacid, A. Leger, C. Rey, and F. Toumani. Dynamic discovery of e-services: A description logics based approach. In *Proceedings of the 18th French conference on advanced databases (BDA), Paris*, pages 21–25, Oct. 2002.
11. A.Y. Levy, A. Rajaraman, and J.J. Ordille. Querying Heterogeneous Information Sources Using Source Descriptions. In *VLDB'96, Mumbai (Bombay), India*, pages 251–262. Morgan Kaufmann, Sep. 1996.
12. A.Y. Levy and M-C. Rousset. Combining Horn Rules and Description Logics in CARIN. *Artificial Intelligence*, 104(1-2):165–209, 1998.
13. G. Wiederhold and Michael R. Genesereth. The Basis for Mediation. In *CoopIS, Vienna, Austria*, pages 140–157, May 1995.